New Molecule on AIDS Treatment

570. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the medical faculty and Scientist in the University of Geneva have developed a new molecule called PSC-RANTES which protects against HIV/AIDS virus;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the manner in which the new molecule would help in AIDS control?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) Yes Sir.

PSC-RANTES is a synthetic protein. PSC-RANTES was created in a laboratory at the University of Geneva. There was a template: RANTES, a human protein that is produced in small quantities in our body. In the event of infection, RANTES stimulates white cells by binding to a receptor CCR5 on the cell membrane. In 1996 it was discovered that HIV also uses the CCR5 receptor to infect the cells involved in our immune system. In effect, CCR5 and RANTES race for the same receptor, when RANTES gets there first, HIV cannot infect the cell. However, despite this natural barrier, RANTES is not tough enough to fight off HIV infection altogether. So, in 1997 Prof. Robin Offord, Dr. Oliver Hartley and their team from the Department of Structural Biology and Bioinformatics in Geneva decided to tinker with the protein a structure in an attempt to make it more effective against infection. Seven years later, they achieved their goal by introducing chemical modification to only three amino acids in the original protein sequence.

PSC-RANTES has the capability to block HIV infection. The idea is to use PSC-RANTES as a microbicide, in the from of a kind of cream. No conclusive clinical research has been carried out till now. Appropriate safety and efficacy studies are required.

(c) Topical microbicides that effectively block interactions between CCR5+immature Langerhans calls (LC) residing within genital epithelia and R5 human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) may decrease sexual transmission of HIV.

Art Clinics

571. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI HARISH RAWAT:
SHRI R.K. ANAND:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) clinics asked an infertile couple to sign a consent form which contains a statement "we also understand that ART procedure carries with it a sexually transmitted disease of AIDS";

(b) if so, the action Government propose to take against such ART clinic which use donor's ova/sperm/embryo without verifying his/her suffering from killer disease; and

(c) the action Government propose to enact a law prohibiting such a practice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) The Government do not have any information and Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Clinics ask an infertile couple to sign consent forms which contains a statement "we also understand that ART procedure carries with it sexually transmitted disease or AIDS".

(b) and (c) Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has prepared Guidelines for Accreditation, Supervision and Regulation of ART Clinics in India, after detailed discussions and debate by expert groups of the ICMR and the National Academy of Medical Sciences and then by practitioners of ART and the general public. Guidelines have been examined by the